DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 456 CS 509 824

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TITLE Reflections of Older Texts.
PUB DATE 1998-04-00
NOTE 7p.; Revised version of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Central States Communication Association (Chicago, IL, April 2-5, 1998).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational History; High Schools; Higher Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; Introductory Courses; *Public Speaking; *Textbook Content; *Textbooks
IDENTIFIERS Whately (Richard)

ABSTRACT

An overseas teaching assignment in 1961 led one educator to visit St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin where he came upon an effigy of Richard Whately and realized that Whately had written a text used in many American universities. The educator especially recalled that Whately had said "Encourage your students." He also wrote that the audience really wants the speaker to succeed. The National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking was started by 17 men, and as soon as it got underway some of them wrote a textbook--the new discipline needed textbooks. The second president of the national association, James A. Winans, copyrighted "Speech Making" in 1915. The book had two themes: one was that a speaker conversed with listeners, talking to them and not at them and the other was that every student worked on conversational speaking, realizing the content of words as they were uttered and speaking with a lively sense of communication. As a student at Grinnell the educator used the book, Charles H. Woolbert's "The Fundamentals of Speech." By fundamentals Woolbert meant Action, Voice, Language, and Thought. Later texts that influenced the beginning course, one in colleges and one in high schools, were those by Alan Monroe, the first president of the Central States Communication Association, and W. Norwood Brigance. Brigance's text dominated secondary education for two decades. (NKA)

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REFLECTIONS OF OLDER TEXTS

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ED 418 456

I have just returned from Chicago where I made a talk about ancient speech texts at the Central States Communication Association convention. I indicated on the NCA Internet that I was willing to share it with other interested people, and since you and others responded, here is a rewrite of what I said or what I wished I had said.

In 1961 when teaching overseas for the University of Maryland I visited St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. My first glimpse was the plaque to Jonathan Swift, dean of the cathedral and his good friend Stella. I wandered around looking at the tablets indicating who was buried under the floor or entombed above it, and in a dark corner I came upon the effigy of Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, and realized that the body inside had written a text taught in many an American university. Lost in thought, I reflected that he had had much to say about burden of proof and presumption, but I especially recalled that he had said, Encourage your students, frequently. And: he wrote that the audience really wants the speaker to succeed. I am not going to make page references and formal citations, *ibid.* and *idem*,; instead I am going to use the gag circulating on the web, sik., meaning "*stuff I know*."

Back home I looked at my two copies, one dated 1880 with a handwritten note [1828], and another that it was a reprint from the seventh (octavo) edition (printing), some kind of record. I am a printer, growing up in a country newspaper office, setting type by hand, six or seven words a minute, and I noted again that the Archbishop had used lots of italics, which meant the hand

CS 509 824

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compositor had to work from two large typecases, fingering small individual lead types 8 pt. and smaller. The air must have been blue with cusswords.

Now to the USA. Arthur Edward Phillips' *Effective Speaking* was one of the first texts advertised in *QJS* (then called *QJSE*). My copy is 1931, with a copyright of 1908. Phillips set himself the task of writing the most complete and authoritative text ever (as who doesn't), and began by reading widely in classical rhetoric, drama and poetry, and of course oratory, coming on down through the Middle Ages and Shakespeare and later centuries, and as a Missourian I am proud that he has four references to Mark Twain. He also liked lists: five "general ends," seven "impelling motives." He argues powerfully for specific, illustrative examples. He must have known about the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking but I have no knowledge that he ever attended one of our conventions.

Our association was started by 17 men and as soon as it got underway some of them wrote a textbook, The new discipline needed textbooks. The founding fathers were about as old as my father, born in 1872, which means they were exposed to Greek and Latin and if they had a speech course they spent much of the time memorizing orations. One founder was James Milton O'Neill, the first president *and* the first editor. A good Catholic, he and his lovely wife Edith had six kids; the story was that every time he had a child he wrote a textbook. This statement does him a slight injustice as actually he wrote ten texts in public speaking, or in argumentation, at which he was especially good. When I taught at Syracuse my wife Gus and I invited him to lecture and bring Edith and stay with us. He also talked to our graduate students at Missouri.

I am mentioning this because I had such wonderful chances to get chunks of the early lore, like his fight to establish a speech "clinic" and the bitter opposition of the medics who claimed that the word "clinic" was the sole property of the medical profession.

I will limit myself to two widely used texts in the first half of the century.

James A. Winans' *Speech Making* was first copyrighted in 1915. Winans was the second president of the national association, 82 presidents ago. Friends called him "Chief." The book had two themes. One was that the speaker conversed with listeners, talking to them, not at them, and certainly not putting on a display or exhibition for them. Every student was to try to attain the two requirements for conversational speaking: (1) Full realization of the content of your words as you utter them. And: (2) Speak with a lively sense of communication. Since Winans was fond of the concept of attention, we learned the three kinds: primary, derived primary, and secondary. Now, since to hold your attention, the speaker has to know what is interesting and compelling, what will explain, persuade, or lead to action, Winans had long chapters on these factors.

In 1944, after retiring from Dartmouth, Winans taught in Switzler Hall at the University of Missouri. On the third floor were John P. Ryan, my Grinnell professor, and Frank M. Rarig of the University of Missouri, both past presidents of the national association, both retired. I was then a young full professor and chair of the department and starting my six-year sentence as executive secretary of the National Association of Teachers of Speech. Since Ryan, Rarig, and their wives visited in our home, we often heard them talk about the olden days. They had had exciting, stimulating careers. Ryan was a colorful teacher, and Missouri students enjoyed him as much as Gus and I had when we studied with him at Grinnell.

I cannot resist telling a couple of yarns about this lively group. Since Rarig had never written a textbook, he did not achieve the stature of the others. His wife confessed to us that Winans got more attention than her husband because of, she would say with some bitterness, "that book."

One day Chief asked if anyone before him had written about conversational quality. Regrettably and deplorably I have a mischievous streak in me that uncontrollably sometimes surfaces and I said, "Well, Chief, I think Whately had a few things to say about natural delivery." "Why," he bristled, "that's not the same thing at all"; he gave me quite a lecture on the subject. I said, "Why don't you write it up for *QJS*?" He did just that.

Now to the second text. In 1923 I was a freshman at Grinnell College, taking public speaking under Ryan, who began the course by holding up a book: "Your textbook is *The Fundamentals of Speech*. The author is Charles H. Woolbert, professor of speech at the University of Iowa. He is the only textbook write in the land whose psychology is right." Woolbert's book was then new, copyrighted 1920.

I had never heard a teach begin a course by bragging on the textbook.

Next semester Woolbert himself, then 47, visited the class and talked to us. He was a slender fellow, average height, hair parted in the middle, rimless spectacles, stiff color. He told us the University of Iowa had been approved to offer the doctorate in speech, and invited us to come study with him. Eventually, in June 1929, I arrived in Iowa City. I am sorry to say that Woolbert had died a week before. Today his name is honored at NCA conventions in the award for best research. He would have like that.

At Iowa City the department in 1929 had still not yet awarded a Ph.D. but a group of half a dozen men and women was steadily moving toward it. I climbed the greasy pole, as Disraeli would say, and got my degree in 1932. At that time there were only 30 or so Ph.D.'s in speech in the country (*sik*, but you can look it up). When I went to Missouri in 1933 there were between me and the Pacific Ocean, two Ph.D.s in speech, maybe three: I remember one in Denver and one in L.A. My friend in Denver, Elwood Murray, started writing about interpersonal

communication. When once I visited him he showed me his Packard and Steinway, purchased with the proceeds. Late Ralph Nichols of the Twin Cities would rise to fame and fortune writing and lecturing about listening. These concepts invaded textbooks and the basic course.

By "fundamentals" Woolbert meant Action, Voice, Language, and Thought. Once I had four high school classes in public speaking, and as an experiment, I decided to discuss gesture in two classes but not in the other two; stuff like the three features of a gesture: the approach, stroke, and return. The stroke coming on or before the word being emphasized. The kids who used gesture were more effective than those who did not but the experiment broke down as the kids in the experimental group taught gesturing to those in the placebo group.

Woolbert's highly valuable section on Voice give specific exercises for improving phrasing, emphasizing, volume, pitch that I have found helpful to know about. He illustrated about twenty different ways of saying "Look at him" to reveal different shades of meaning.

Voice and its companion Action must not be neglected in today's courses. JFK needed to be taught to get rid of jerky arm movements and use something more graceful. Bill Clinton spends a lot of time perfecting action and voice before an important speech. Al Gore ought to. He has started talking louder but Woolbert would tell him there is more to it than that.

Later texts that influenced the beginning course, one in colleges and one in high schools, were written by two of my grand professional friends. The text by Alan Monroe, the first president of the Central States Communication Association, has had a long life, starting in 1935 and still going strong. The high school text by W. Norwood Brigance (and Wilhemina Hedde) dominated secondary education for two decades.

That's about what I told the group at Chicago. I would like to make us all better acquainted with the first generation of teachers--the founders and others their age, like A. Craig

Baird of Iowa and Ralph Dennis and Lew Sarett of Northwestern--that did not have the degree themselves, but, like O'Neill and Winans, got it for us. My generation, the second group, increased the number of institutions that offered the degree, founded state and regional associations and multiplied the number of speech departments. The present generation, the third group, is doing amazing things with the discipline itself--recently got us into the American Council of Learned Societies. We're an epic still being written.

April 4, 1998